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European Union

Fishery Products

Paler Farmed Salmon in the EU

2003

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Report Highlights:

On January 24, 2003, the European Commission adopted Directive 2003/7/EC which sets new conditions for the pigment canthaxanthin (E 161g) used as an additive in feed for salmon, trout, broilers and laying hens. Maximum concentrations are set at 25 mg canthaxanthin/kg of feed for salmon, trout and broilers and at 8 mg/kg of feed for laying hens.

Includes PSD changes: No
Includes Trade Matrix: No
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Paler Farmed Salmon in the EU

On January 24, 2003, the European Commission adopted Directive 2003/7/EC which sets new conditions for the pigment canthaxanthin (E 161g) used as an additive in feed for salmon, trout, broilers and laying hens. Maximum concentrations are set at 25 mg canthaxanthin/kg of feed for salmon, trout and broilers and at 8 mg/kg of feed for laying hens. Member states must implement the provisions of the Directive by December 1, 2003.

To meet the consumer's preference for pink salmon, the feed additive canthaxanthin is used to give farmed salmon the same pinkish color as wild salmon which gets its color from a shrimp diet. Canthaxanthin is also used to give poultry skin and egg yolks a brighter yellow color. The use of this feed additive is purely cosmetic and does not affect the taste or quality of the food.

Scientific assessment revealed a link between high canthaxanthin intake and eyesight problems. Expert Committees at both the World Health Organization and the European Commission set an Acceptable Daily Intake of 0.03 mg of canthaxanthin per kg human body weight. As a result, the maximum levels of canthaxanthin in feed were reviewed. The new Directive reduces the current authorized levels of up to 80 mg/kg feed to 25 mg/kg feed for salmon, trout and broilers and to 8 mg/kg for laying hens.

The full text of the directive can be downloaded from the Internet at http://europa.eu.int/eur-lex/en/dat/2003/l_022/l_02220030125en00280030.pdf.

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